BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 1 NUMBERS 5 & 6
December 1967

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THE TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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THE BULLETIN OF THE TOS is mailed to all members of the Texas Ornithological Society not in arrears for dues. Annual dues for active members is $3.00, for sustaining members, $5.00. Inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to W. Russell Weil, Treasurer, Texas Ornithological Society, 3429 Lovers Lane, Dallas, Texas 75225. The BULLETIN is issued six times a year. Individual issues may be purchased for fifty cents a copy. Original articles, reports and news of interest to TOS members are solicited for inclusion in the BULLETIN. All articles and letters for publication should be submitted to the Editor, Department of Biology, Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Editorials are by invitation, but the Editor welcomes correspondence and suggestions regarding subject matter. Sight records and regional news should be sent to the appropriate Regional Director for forwarding to the Editor.

Bulletin of the Texas
Ornithological Society
Vol. 1, December, 1967

Further Evidence of Bushtit Lumping In Texas

ROLAND H. WAUER

Although the AOU (Check-list of North American Birds: 395-396, 1957) divides Bushtits into two species, the Common (Psaltriparus minimus) and the Black-eared (P. melanotis), evidence continues to accumulate to refute this split. A recent sighting near Laguna Meadow (6300 feet elevation) in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park, Texas, adds to this evidence. There, on May 26, 1967, I observed two black-eared Bushtits feeding eight fledglings of which four were black-eared and four were non-black-eared. Throughout a period of about four minutes, during which time I watched them from about 25 feet through 9 X binoculars, the larger black-eared individuals were kept busy stuffing begging birds of both the black-eared and plain phases with food.

Phillips, Marshall, and Monson (The Birds of Arizona: 111-112, 1964) have best summarized the Bushtit problem. Marshall examined and aged all available Texas specimens, including the black-eared type specimen from the Davis Mountains, and concluded that "only juvenile males in the Davis and Chisos Mountains, and only some of the adult males in the Chisos Mountains, have black ears; therefore 'melanotis' is the same species as minimus." In explanation of the recent sighting above, they add that "a second clutch is often laid before the first young have left (the nest), and these subsequently help feed their younger brothers and sisters." Apparently, one or both of the larger black-eared birds seen feeding the newly fledged birds were part of the first clutch.

Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834

Review of Permanent Texas Conservation Organizations

EDWARD FRITZ

A. PRIMARILY CONSERVATIONIST

1. The Texas Committee on Natural Resources

   Organized in 1967 with a limit of twenty key conservationists from (but not representing as such) a diversity of organizations and geographic areas.*

   Purpose: To maintain a coordinated effort, well-financed, toward accomplishing a broad set of conservation goals in Texas, and toward assisting in national conservation achievements.

   Actually engaged in an 18-plank state conservation platform, through correspondence with and visits upon conservation groups and state agencies.

   Publishes Texas Conservation Progress about six times a year. Chairman: Edward C. Fritz, 909 Reliance Life Building, Dallas, 75201.

   Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete effort.

2. Conservation Federation of Texas.

   Organized in 1965 under leadership of Margaret Louise Hancock and others. Twenty-eight affiliated organizations and a number of individual paid-up members.

   Affiliates: Houston Bass Club, DuPont Employees Sportsmen's Club, Marshall Ford Game Protective Assn., Copano Sportsmen's Club, San Antonio Audubon Society, Texas Bait Dealers Assn., Bayshore Rod, Real & Gun Club, Travis Audubon Society, Corpus Christi Outdoor Club, Bayou Rifles, Inc., Houston Sportsmen's Club, Fort Worth Audubon Society, South Padre Island Shell Club, Texas Field Archery Association, Bay City Sportsmen's Club, Rockport Sportsmen's Conservation Assn., Pearland Sportsmen's Club, South Texas Beagle Club, Gulf Coast Horticultural Society, Dallas Audubon Society, Coastal Bend Shell Club, Red River Sportsmen's Club, Tri-City Beach Civic Association, Texas Garden Clubs., Inc., Abilene Archery Club, Pasadena Bass Club. Actively engaged in state-wide conservation effort through The Conservation Committee:

**This is the Texas organization which cooperates with the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, a national organization of which the Board of Directors includes, as individuals, key leaders of the National Audubon Society, Nat. Parks Assoc., Wilderness Soc., Sierra Club, Nat. Wildlife Management Inst., Conservation Foundation, etc.*

President: Dr. Hans A. Suter, 1002 Chamberlain, Corpus Christi.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete effort.

3. Texas Conservation Council.

Organized in 1958. Number of members not divulged.

Purpose: To stimulate public awareness of the urgent need for good conservation practices and to promote legislation that will protect the public's conservation interest. Keeps its members informed about state and national conservation issues by publishing three or four newsletters a year and sends news flashes when immediate legislative action is needed to attain some conservation objective.

Secretary: Mrs. A. V. Emmott, 730 East Friar Tuck Lane, Houston 77024.

Extent of cooperation with other groups listed here: Answers letters, secretary participated in Conservation Legislative Day with some of the other organizations, etc.

4. The Nature Conservancy, Inc.

Organized in 1946 from committee of Ecological Society of America. Membership 12,000. Texas chapter, organized in 1966, has 140 paid members.

Purpose: Land acquisition is the primary task of the Conservancy. Educational and scientific efforts are part of the program, but land conservation receives top priority because a unique area destroyed by industrial or residential development is gone forever.

Publications include The Nature Conservancy News, a quarterly, and a series of Ecological Studies Leaflets relating to Conservancy-owned natural areas.

President of Texas Chapter: Edward C. Fritz, 909 Reliance Life Building, Dallas 75201.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: No legislative functions whatsoever; assists in Texas Natural Area Inventory.

5. Texas Wildlife.

Organized in 1964. No members nor dues as such. Membership of Board of Directors, 30. Branch of World Wildlife Fund, organized in 1961.

Purpose: To acquire and to operate lands for the preservation of endangered or limited species, including the Texas Coastal Prairie Chicken and the White-Winged Dove (both in Texas and Mexico).

(*Continued on next page*)

(*REVIEW OF CONSERVATION—Continued from page* 5)

Executive Secretary: Mr. Howard B. Dodgen, 316 Perry-Brooks Building, Austin, Texas.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: No legislative functions whatsoever; assists with Texas Natural Area Inventory.

6. Committee for a Balanced Water Plan.

Organized in 1966. Membership 100, including 38 biologists. Actively engaged in promoting alternatives to the proposed Texas Water Plan, including desalting. Presented statements by personal appearance at 26 of 27 scattered hearings of Texas Water Development Board in summer of 1966. Prepared preliminary listing of Natural Areas of Texas now in hands of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Chairman: Edward C. Fritz, 909 Reliance Life Building, Dallas 75201. Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete in all points involving water.

B. PRIMARILY OTHER INTERESTS.

7. Texas Ornithological Society.

Organized in 1953. Fifteen affiliated groups and 780 paid-up members. Purposes: To promote the discovery and dissemination of knowledge of birds; to promote the wisest use of natural resources for the greatest good of mankind; etc.

President: Dr. William J. Graber III, 990 23rd Street, Beaumont 77706.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete effort.

8. Other Affiliates of The National Audubon Society.

Organized at various dates: Alice, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Lower Rio Grande, San Antonio, Texas Panhandle, Texas Southmost, Travis and Tyler Audubon Societies and Houston Outdoor Nature Club. Membership varies in such affiliates from 20 to 530.

National Audubon Society organized about 1912.

Purposes: Conduct educational activities pertaining to natural resources.

Texas Field Representative: Being selected.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete so far as education is concerned.

9. Sportsmen's Club of Texas, Inc.

Organized in 1956. Membership 120 clubs and 90,000 members. Affiliated with National Wildlife Federation.

Purposes: To promote and foster a general and continued movement for the conservation, utilization, restoration, protection and scientific supervision in the State of Texas of all game, fish, fowl and other wildlife in its natural habitat. To promote sportsmanlike methods in hunting and fishing and proper respect for the rights of landowners; etc.

Executive Secretary: Mr. Cecil Reid, 606 Littlefield Building, Austin. Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Answers letters, testified at two hearings on same side as other conservation groups.

10. Sierra Club.

Texas chapter with 370 members, is a branch of national organization. Purposes: To engage in wilderness hikes, boat trips and camping; and to help preserve wilderness area. Branch, Nat. Sierra Club.

Conservation chairman: M. Lea Rudee, 2108 Addison, Houston.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Chairman attends joint conservation meetings and sends letters on some of the same points.

11. Texas Explorers Club.

Organized for several years. Membership about 200. Affiliate of American Whitewater Affiliation, dedicated to the preservation of river systems in their natural condition.

Underway for some time have been projects including sponsorship of movies of the Big Thicket by Peter Koch, working toward the establishment of the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, working for the preservation of Capote Falls, working for the inclusion of certain parts of the Rio Grande River in Texas in the wilderness and wildlife programs, and a current program encourages hiking trails in Central Texas. Special interest of the organization is the conservation of any natural object, locale, or item of plant or animal wildlife, from the press of industrialization, poor land management, and the abuses of pollution. The organization is unique in that every member is supposed to have made a tour of some wilderness areas without a professional guide.

President: Mr. Bob Burleson, First National Building, Temple 76501.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Complete.

12. Texas Academy of Sciences.

In 1967, this distinguished scientific organization formed a special committee to assist with the Texas Natural Area Inventory. Committee Chairman: Dr. Gerald Raun, Biology Department, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Endorsed Texas Natural Area Inventory.

13. Texas Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Branch of multi-membered and powerful national association interested primarily in upper watershed dams and adjoining recreation areas.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: None yet.

14. Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.

Branch of multi-membered national association interested primarily in cultivation of garden plants. Texas mailing list of 40,000.

Extent of coordination with other groups listed here: Last year's conservation chairman friendly but without authority to coordinate. This year, no response from its president as yet.

REPORTS

Cade and Maclean found that **Sandgrouse** in the Kalahari Desert may nest "at least 20 miles away from surface water and still allow the male to transport sufficient amounts of water to nourish the young." This is done by retaining water in their soaked plumage. These seed-eaters do not regurgitate their food or water, nor produce "pigeon's milk. Condor, 69: 323-243.

A male **Sparrow Hawk** was recently seen to capture a Hoary Bat in flight. Although the bat managed to escape, it died from the talon wounds. Condor, 69: 426.

Several University of Oklahoma observers estimated a flock of **Turkey Vultures** at "several thousand individuals including several unidentified hawks" near Veracruz, Mexico, on March 27, 1966. Huge migrating flocks of vultures are not uncommon in Mexico. Condor, 69: 425-426.

Of 154 bird species found in eight vegetative communities in New Mexico's Sandia Mountains, 92 were considered to breed there according to John L. Tatschl. Condor, 69: 479-490.

A classic case of conditioning was found in **Cactus Wrens** by Robert Ricklefs, who fashioned a perching bar at the nest entrance. Each time an adult would enter the nest it would trigger a counter. The counter, however, made a rather loud noise. The researcher happened to trip the counter when examining the young who immediately started to beg loudly. Such a response, he found, could be induced simply by tripping the perch. Condor, 69: 528-529.

Kenneth R. Bailey at Texas A&M reports an interesting behavior of an American Woodcock which was feeding on a lawn when a white cat ran toward it and froze. The Woodcock evidently was unresponsive and continued feeding near the cat which never pounced on it; however, when a yellow cat came out of the bushes near by, the bird flew away.—Reported by Jack T. Kent.

During **Wood Duck** research in Ohio, Paul Stewart discovered that Wood Duck ducklings diving beneath the water did not always reappear. Wading into the pond, on such an occasion, Stewart found several ducklings entangled in filamentous algae. Although Wood Duck youngsters seldom dive but seek shelter along the banks, it appears that drownings were one of the chief causes of loss of ducklings. Condor, 69: 531.

Research with planetarium - caged birds revealed that 24 of 33 **Indigo Buntings** displayed a consistent tendency to orient in the direction appropriate for the migration season, and reversed their direction when the north-south axis of the planetarium was reversed 180°. They lost all ability to orient when the stars were turned off and the dome diffusely illuminated. Stephen T. Emlen's findings support the hypothesis that Indigo Buntings are able to obtain directional information from the starry sky. Auk, 84: 309-342.

John Galley's recent note, in the **Phalarope,** on his observation of a **Turkey Vulture** killing a Coachwhip Snake was recently corroborated by a similar incident reported by Mueller and Berger. They saw a Turkey Vulture eat a **House Sparrow** that it killed after taking it from a mist net. Auk, 84: 430.

—Reports in this issue prepared by Roland Wauer

The Nature Conservancy

JERRY STRICKLING

The Nature Conservancy is a member-governed organization, incorporated in the District of Columbia for non-profit educational and scientific purposes.

Its work began in 1917 as a national committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 this committee organized as an independent group, and in 1950 adopted the name The Nature Conservancy.

Representatives, chapters, and local committees help carry on Nature Conservancy activities within local areas. Projects to preserve specific areas are normally financed by local efforts through gifts and donations, with technical advice, and loans from the national organization.

Charles H. W. Foster recently resigned as the highly successful Commissioner of Conservation in Massachusetts to become President of The Nature Conservancy.

In order to hold title to the Prairie Chicken Preserve at Eagle Lake until the World Wildlife Fund was set up to assume title, The Nature Conservancy in 1964 formed a Texas corporation, The Nature Conservancy of Texas, Inc. The Texas corporation recently transferred title of the Eagle Lake 3600 acres to World Wildlife. In October, 1967, the Texas corporation obtained title to Ezell's Cave in San Marcos, the only habitat of the Texas blind salamander, listed in the redbook as an endangered species.

Late in 1965, some Texas members of The Nature Conservancy formed a Texas chapter with ten members on its board of trustees. Some of these trustees interlock with the Texas corporation so that the general activities and the land ownership are coordinated. The Texas chapter, in addition to recommending natural areas for preservation, paid expenses for preparing the Preliminary Listing of Natural Areas of Texas, now being multigraphed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Several Texas Ornithological Society members have key posts in the Texas chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Edward C. Fritz is president.

The Nature Conservancy works with all conservation groups needing guidance, permanent title-holding, and management facilities. While depending primarily on local supporters for fund-raising, The Nature Conservancy makes advances for approved projects from a revolving fund. Contribution and membership dues are tax-exempt.

Nature Conservancy serves a function that our Texas Ornithological Society is not set up to serve. It might bear your consideration to assist the work of this organization, and the coordination of our conservation efforts, by joining Nature Conservancy. Five dollars sent to the following address will make you a member of both the national organization and the Texas Chapter: The Nature Conservancy, 1522 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

NEWS

At the Thanksgiving TOS meeting in Beaumont **Mr. John Dennis** spoke about the discovery of the **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** and presented sound recordings. Mr. Dennis recently discovered this rare bird in the Big Thicket. At the Board Meeting, the officers decided that members who have not paid their dues by April 1 will be dropped from the membership list. In addition to some highly successful field trips, the meeting included some slides of the Masked Duck by John Tveten. Approximately 125 participants attended the meeting.

The following **Christmas Bird Count** dates were reported to the editor: PALO PINTO, Dec. 23, Region II; DALLAS, Dec. 30, Dallas County Aud. Soc.; FT. WORTH, Dec. 30, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc.; SOUTHERN TRAVIS COUNTY, Dec. 22, Travis Aud. Soc.; WESTERN TRAVIS COUNTY, Dec. 30, Travis Aud. Soc.; CORPUS CHRISTI, Dec. 30, Corpus Christi Outdoor Club, PALO DURO CANYON, Dec. 30, Tex. Panhandle Aud. Soc.; LUBBOCK, Dec. 30, Lubbock Aud. Soc.; STANTON, Dec. 22, Midland Nat.; BIG SPRING, Dec. 23, Midland Nat.; MIDLAND, Dec. 24, Midland Nat.; SHEFFIELD, Dec. 29, Midland Nat.; DEL RIO, Dec. 30, Midland Nat.; DAVIS MST., Dec. 31, Midland Nat.; BALMORHEA, Jan. 1, Midland Nat.

The following field trips were held during October, November and December: POLLARD RANCH, near Wimberly, Oct. 8, Travis Aud. Soc.; AUSTIN and vicinity, Oct. 15; EAGLE LAKE REGION, Oct. 21, Travis Aud. Soc. (Tom Waddell, leader); KERRVILLE and vicinity, Nov. 4, Travis Aud. Soc.; SAN ANTONIO ZOO, Nov. 12, Travis Aud. Soc. (Edgar Kincaid, leader); DALLAS and vicinity, Oct. 7, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Geth Osborn, leader); DALLAS and vicinity, Oct. 14, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Hazel Nichols, leader); DALLAS and vicinity, Oct. 21, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Polly Miller, leader); DALLAS and vicinity, Nov. 4, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Warren Pulich, leader); CORPUS CHRISTI (Cabaniss Field), Oct. 28, Corpus Christi Outdoor Club; AMARILLO and vicinity, Oct. 22, Tex. Panhandle Aud. Soc.; BENBROOK DAM, MUSTANG PARK, Nov. 4, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc. (Inez Wetsel and Ethel Bowman, leaders); HUFFMAN'S CAMP, WILKERSON RANCH and surrounding area, Nov. 19, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc. (Jessie Maye Smith, leader); STATE FISH HATCHERY, Oct. 7, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc. (Joe and Mary Ruth Lowe, leaders); IRVING SEWAGE PONDS, Oct. 15, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc. (Margaret Parker, Charles Crabtree, leaders); MUSTANG SPRINGS and MUSTANG DRAW, Oct. 15, Midland Nat.; TOM GREEN COUNTY, Oct. 29, Midland Nat., (Anne LeSassier, leader); DALLAS and vicinity, Nov. 18, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Leonard and Noma Huffhines, leaders); FT. WORTH and vicinity, Dec. 2, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc. (Midge Randolph, Flo Stanfield, leaders); FT. WORTH and vicinity, Dec. 16, Ft. Worth Aud. Soc.; AUSTIN and vicinity, Dec. 9, Travis Aud. Soc.; DALLAS and vicinity, Dec. 2, Dallas County Aud. Soc. (Margaret Roddy, leader).

The following programs were held by local groups during October and November: MRS. ELIZABETH CRABB on the libraries' functions, uses, and facilities as related to birds and natural history, Tex. Panhandle Aud. Soc.; EDWARD FRITZ on "Water Pollution" and "Paradise Polluted" (film), Ft. Worth Aud. Soc.; EDWARD FRITZ on conservation, Tyler Aud. Soc.; KEITH A. ARNOLD on "Birding in Costa Rica", Dallas County Aud. Soc.; "Central California's Coastal Plain," film), Dallas County Aud. Soc.; DAN KILGORE on local geography, Corpus Christi Outdoor Club.

NEW MEMBERS

REGION I
Mary E. Bivins Memorial Library, 1000 Polk Street, Amarillo, Texas 79105
Library, Texas Technological College, Box 4079, Lubbock, Texas 79409

REGION II
Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Lowe, 3005 Willing Ave., Ft. Worth, Texas 76110
Dan Allen Redwine, 3544 Dorothy Lane, No., Ft. Worth, Texas 76107
John Biewener, 10864 Waterbridge Circle, Dallas, Texas 75218
Mrs. Leroy Stankewitz, 700 W. Coleman, Iowa Park, Texas 76367
Mrs. J. M. Dysart, 4321 Birchman, Ft. Worth, Texas 76107
Mrs. Ruby E. Crow, 3809 Trailwood Lane, Ft. Worth, Texas 76109
Mrs. Tie D. Davis, 3532 Rankin, Dallas, Texas 75205
Mrs. Lee G. Knox, 1213 Amherst Drive, Denton, Texas 76201

REGION III
Miss Mozelle Powell, Box 2032, S.H.S.C., Huntsville, Texas 77340
Mrs. Ernest Weldon McDaniel, Rt. 1, Box 174-C, Kountze, Texas 77625
Mrs. Johann Trimble, Box 699, Kountze, 77625

REGION IV
Big Bend Natural History Association, P. O. Box 86, Big Bend National Park, Texas, 79834

REGION V
John W. White, 6002 Bull Creek Road, Austin, Texas 78757
Mrs. V. L. Adrean, 309 E. Polk St., Burnet, Texas 78611 (reinstated)
Richard A. Shannon, 3804 Ave. H., Austin, Texas 78751
Mr. Rex A. Lawrence, 223 Middlebury, San Antonio, Texas 78217
Miss Marian B. Davis, 2701 Wooldridge Drive, Austin, Texas 78703
Mrs. Ursula Kramer, 3200 Oakmont, Austin, Texas 78703
Mary Ann Marek, 726 Avant Avenue, San Antonio, Texas 78210
Mrs. Barbara A. Ribble, 2015 Bristol, Austin, Texas 77723

REGION VI
Jim D. Bowmer, First National Bank Bldg., Temple, Texas 76501
Mrs. James H. Dozier, 1005 Walton Drive, College Station, Texas 77840

REGION VII
Mrs. Forest Whitcher, P. O. Box 165, Premont, Texas 78375
Juanita V. Lozano, 300 S. Almond St., Alice, Texas 78332
Mrs. Lyndle J. Betz, Box 566, Portland, Texas 78374
Mr. Archie D. Wood, P. O. Box 657, Roma, Texas 78584
Laverne S. Nielsen, P. O. Box 1, Falcon Heights, Texas 78545

REGION VIII
Mrs. Earl Watson, Rt. 2, Box 1158, Silsbee, Texas 77656
Mrs. H. R. Huey, 695 19th St., Beaumont, Texas 77706
Mrs. Ruth T. Buskirk, P. O. Box 148, Stowell, Texas 77661
Mr. Lowell K. Mower, 5311 Institute Lane, Houston, Texas 77005
Mr. Henry T. Fielding, 4141 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, Texas 77025
Mrs. Edward D. Futch, 1021 Harbor View Drive, Galveston, Texas 77550
Miss Mary F. Barrett, 1465 Avenue F, Beaumont, Texas 77701
Miss Judy Denesi McNutt, 2338 Underwood, Houston, Texas 77025
Mrs. Flave Pledger, 2833 23rd Street, Orange, Texas 77630
Mrs. R. E. Munro, 3860 Holland, Beaumont, Texas 77707
Librarian, Lamar State College of Technology, Beaumont, Texas 77704
Mrs. Mavis Kelsey, 2 Longbow, Houston, Texas 77024
Mrs. Minnie Elizabeth Hugg, 3586 W. Blackmon Lane, Beaumont, Texas 77706

OUT OF STATE
Mrs. Raymond C. R. Nichols, 1524 Hickory St., Texarkana, Arkansas 75501
Annette Duchein, Spartan Mills, Spartanburg, S. C. 29301
Henry Nicholas Halberg, 5809 N. Country Club Blvd., Little Rock, Ark. 72207
Mr. and Mrs. J. Rolan Brown, 308 N. Oakland St., Magnolia, Arkansas 71753
Paul F. Nighswonger, Dept. Bot. & Micro., Oklahoma University, Norman, Oklahoma 73069
C. J. Shaw, 8024 Sylvan Hills Highway, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72116
John V. Dennis, Box 389, Leesburg, Virginia 22075

MISSISSIPPI KITE—(Continued from page 3)

incubation period is about 30 days. After the young hatch they remain in the nest for four or five weeks. I have found nothing that would indicate that the Mississippi Kite ever raises a second brood, nor that they ever nest again if calamity befalls the young. On the other hand, if the eggs are destroyed, especially in early incubation, the birds will nest again within a short time. If the eggs are lost when incubation is advanced, the pair will usually abandon any nesting activity.

FOOD

These kites are certainly beneficial to the ranchers. Their food consists primarily of grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, large beetles, and other insects. Practically all of these seem to be caught in the air. A few times I have seen a kite swoop to the ground and pick up something or at times pick something from the top of a branch or from the top of tall grass. Such insects are always grasped in the claws and then eaten while the bird is in flight. I have never seen a kite molest any kind of a small bird. In fact, small birds pay no attention to them. Bullock's Orioles frequently nest in the same tree with kites. Kites have been reported to occasionally feed on small lizards or snakes, but I have never observed them to take anything but large insects.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

While a few of the early spring migrants may reach central Texas in the latter part of April, the majority arrive about the southern edge of their nesting range the first week in May. These first appear in small groups of six or eight birds and gradually move northward, seemingly floating along in huge circles with each circle carrying them farther north. Some have been observed near the ground apparently looking for food, but again each movement carries them northward. Farther south they have been reported to migrate northward in large flocks. Such a flock of two or three hundred birds was observed in Kerr County in early May 1965. This was on a dark rainy day and when first discovered all of the oak trees on a hillside seemed to be full of kites. However, they were restless and every few minutes those on the south side of the assembly would fly up and move a few hundred yards northward. In a few minutes, the next echelon would fly up and move just beyond the first flight. This kept up until early in the afternoon when the weather had cleared and the entire flock took flight and moved northward in huge circles. The fall migration begins early in September, and by the first week in October no kites can be found. My observations have been that this movement first includes only two, three or four birds, possibly a family group together. These groups gradually disappear from the summer range. Apparently, these small groups later assemble some place and then move southward in large flocks. Several reports have been published of these kites migrating southward in large flocks, and Warren Pulich (pers. comm.) observed a migrating flock of several hundred in Denton County.

ENEMIES

The Mississippi Kite has very few natural enemies, but man with his constantly increasing activities exacts an ever increasing toll. The clearing of mesquite and use of the land for agriculture is probably not of major importance because the kites can move to the trees in a shelterbelt or along a stream. However, the brush control programs with aerial application of chemicals undoubtedly have a long range detrimental effect on the birds as well as the destruction of young when defoliation is done during the nesting season. Likewise the widespread use of chemical insecticides certainly contaminates many of the insects on which they feed. The long range

(Continued on next page)

SIGHT RECORDS

2500 SWAINSON'S HAWKS, Oct. 8, Dallas (M. & C. Kiblinger); 200 WHITE PELICANS, Oct. 11, Dallas (T. Gollob); 175 WHITE PELICANS, Oct. 24, Irving (T. Gollob); 7 BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS, Sept. 9, Jasper County (B. Cornelius et al); 200 RED-TAILED HAWKS, Oct. 7, Ft. Worth (B. & C. Crabtree); WOOD THRUSH, Oct. 6, Amarillo (P. Acord & T. Fox); RINGED TURTLE DOVE nested successfully in the wild, Sept. 14, Amarillo; DUNLIN & SANDERLING, Oct. 22, Buffalo Lake (K. Seyffert); NASHVILLE WARBLER, Nov. 11, Buffalo Lake (K. Seyffert); SAGE SPARROW, Oct. 29, Amarillo (R. Ross et al); 15 HORNED GREBES, Oct. 28, Amarillo (K. Seyffert); 3 WESTERN GREBES, 1 BONAPARTE'S GULL, Nov. 12, Buffalo Lake (K. Seyffert); WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, Sept. 28, Lubbock (L. Galloway); BONAPARTE'S GULL, Nov. 4, Midland (T. Jones & J. Savage); WHITE PELICAN & SNOW GEESE, Oct. 28, Midland (T. Jones & J. Savage;

WHITE PELICAN, Oct. 29, Tom Green County (Anne LeSassier et al); WORM-EATING WARBLER, Sept. 17, Midland (K. Raney & B. Webb); HORNED GREBE, Oct. 28, Austin (David Simon); LEAST GREBE, Oct. 12, Austin (M.A. McClendon); WHITE-FACED IBIS, Sept., N. of Johnson City (Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Kinsey); COMMON TEAL, Nov. 20, Austin (D. & W. Simon), first area record; COMMON GOLDENEYE, Nov. 11, Austin (M.A. McClendon); RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, Dec. 4, Austin (Mrs. M. S. Swartz); SWALLOW-TAILED KITE, Aug. 25, near Woodsboro (Mrs. J. J. Jordan) also, same area, Sept. 2 (F. Oatman); 2000 BROAD-WINGED HAWKS, Sept. 24, Beeville (Mrs. A. H. Geiselbrecht); OSPREY, Sept. 28, Austin (M. A. McClendon); SANDHILL CRANES (major flight), Oct. 25, Austin (M. A. McClendon, M. Webster, F. Webster); UPLAND PLOVERS (heavy flight), Aug. 10 & 28, Beeville (Mrs. A. H. Geiselbrecht) and Aug. 28, Austin (F. Webster);

34 BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS, Sept. 10, SW of Winnie (Dr. & Mrs. S. Wier, Mrs. G. E. Cornelius, et al); 3 NORTHERN PHALAROPES, Aug. 18, Austin (M. A. McClendon); 2 POMARINE JAEGERS, Sept. 23, Falcon Dam (M. & R. Adams); BONAPARTE'S GULLS, Nov. 6-29, Austin (M. A. McClendon); 2 SOOTY TERNS, Sept. 23, Falcon Dam (M. & R. Adams); 3 GROOVE-BILLED ANIS, Aug. 25, Oct. 1-7, Beeville (Mrs. A. H. Geiselbrecht); BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD, Nov. 9 & 10, Baytown (Mrs. E. H. Busby); 3 VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS, Oct. 21, Anahauc Nat. Wildlife Ref. (N. M. Strickling, H. Nichols); SAGE THRASHER, Oct. 15, Anahuac Ref. (J. Tveten); PROTHONOTARY WARBLER, Sept. 22, Austin (D. Simon); WORM-EATING WARBLER, Oct. 4, 5 & 6, Austin (D. Simon).

MISSISSIPPI KITE—(*Continued from page* 12)

effect of these chemicals on wildlife has already been demonstrated by the decimation of peregrines, ospreys, and other species. Another serious human influence on the kite population is the needless killing. One rancher in Dickens County to whom I inquired about "Grasshopper Hawks" told me that his boy had shot 14 during the past few weeks because they thought these hawks caught young chickens. Another rancher north of Vernon told me that he had shot seven during the previous week. Obviously this kind of slaughter will eventually lessen their numbers. Numerous published reports, particularly in Audubon Field Notes seem to indicate that the overall population of Mississippi Kites has increased during the past 20 years. However, it is possible that this may be due to the greatly increased number of field observers rather than to an actual increase in the number of birds. Regardless of the increased number of local observations, the ever-increasing utilization of land and agricultural activities with the uncontrolled spreading of insecticides, there is no question about the gradual decrease in kite population in future years. *Kerrville, Texas.*

NOTICES

The TOS spring meeting will be at McKittrick Canyon and Carlsband Caverns May 4 and 5. Details will be published in the next issue.

About the middle of February, you will receive your notice for the payment of 1968 dues. A prompt response will be appreciated. And, we will especially appreciate SUSTAINING memberships.—Russell Weil, Treasurer.

Editors of local newsletters are encouraged to quote from the TOS Bulletin when they find information which may be of interest to their members. In all fairness to the Society, credit should be given to the TOS Bulletin when material is quoted. If major articles are duplicated, it would be courteous to the author of the article if permission were requested to reproduce the article. This permission may be obtained by writing to the editor of the TOS Bulletin. One method of increasing TOS membership is by reaching individuals through local newsletters.

The next annual convention of the National Audubon Society will be held in St. Louis, April 25-30, 1969. The next annual meeting of members will be in New York City, November 13, 1968 and will coincide with the Annual Dinner.

The Quarterly Progress Report of the Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit reports on the effect of brush removal in western Oklahoma on Lesser Prairie Chickens and other studies on Oklahoma birds. This publication may be received from John A. Morrison, 408 Life Sciences Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074.

As an aid in identifying the Horned Lizard and the Texas Tortoise —both now protected in Texas—the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, John Reagan Building, Austin, Texas 78701 has published an identification leaflet which may be obtained free of charge from that department.—Texas Parks and Wildlife News